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AUTHOR Larkin, Martha J.; Ellis, Edwin S.
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ABSTRACT

A series of studies is in progress to investigate special educators' perspectives of practices in the education of students with learning disabilities. This paper reports on the first phase which focused on construction and distribution of a survey instrument ("Selecting Specific Practices") and analyzing the results. Four dimensions of practicing teachers' and university professors' perspectives were explored: Teacher-Now, Teacher-Future, School-Now, and School-Future. The sample for the local survey consisted of 42 graduate students with previous school teaching experience; the sample for the national survey consisted of 67 randomly-selected educators who were members of a national professional organization that focuses on education of persons with learning disabilities. The instrument consisted of 26 scenarios regarding instruction of students with learning disabilities, service delivery, and definitions. Analysis of the survey results revealed that teachers viewed both themselves and their schools as currently reflecting more traditional practices. In the future, they would like to be more like the emerging practices, with instruction being more contextualized and holistic. "Winning" practices included teacher-centered classes, contextualized/holistic instruction, classifying to secure help, and providing help before classifying; "losers" included child-centered instruction, emphasizing isolated skills, diagnostic/remediation model, inclusion, and using learning disabilities as a basis for explaining problems. These findings support the literature in that teachers may have different perspectives of instructional practices concerning learning disabled students. The findings of patterns of practices in Phase 1 will comprise the practices selected for further examination in Phase 2 of the study. Nine data analysis figures are included. (NAV)

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"HOW DO WE TEACH? HOW WILL WE TEACH?: ASSESSING TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF TRADITIONAL AND POTENTIALLY EMERGING INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE LEARNING DISABLED"

Martha J. Larkin
Research conducted with Edwin S. Ellis

The University of Alabama
P. O. Box 870231
Tuscaloosa, AL 35487-0231
(205) 348-7340
Fax (205) 348-9849
e-mail mlarkin@bamaed.ua.edu

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Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association, Biloxi, Mississippi, November 1995.

"HOW DO WE TEACH? HOW WILL WE TEACH?: ASSESSING TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF TRADITIONAL AND POTENTIALLY EMERGING INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE LEARNING DISABLED"

A recent literature review suggests that teachers may have different perspectives of instructional practices concerning the education of students who are learning disabled. Teacher perspectives refer to the ways teachers think about their work (e.g. purposes, goals, conceptions of children, curriculum) and the ways in which they give meaning to these thoughts through their classroom behavior (Goodman & Adler, 1985; Tabachnick & Zeichner, 1985). Unlike more abstract constructs, perspectives are set in the concrete world of actual situations and refer to particular actions. Teacher perspectives take in to account how the situation of the school and classroom is experienced; how this situation is interpreted given the teacher's background of experiences, beliefs, and assumptions; and how this interpretation is manifested in behaviors (Goodman & Adler ,1985).

My interest in teacher perspectives has grown over the last several years as I have reflected about my own experiences as a student and teacher and recognized the influence of perspectives upon instruction in schools. Let me briefly share with you a story that illustrates the influence of perspectives. I was educated in public schools in a small town with a traditional school system which provided some advantages, but also some disadvantages. Teachers in my school mostly taught the same way and often there was one approach to finding answers, problem-solving, etc. This seemed to be a philosophy that permeated my education from elementary school on into high school, through my teacher preparation program as an undergraduate and somewhat into my Master's program. Now I look back on the "only one way" philosophy as a disadvantage, because I was not exposed to or did not know how to value different perspectives.

Something happened during my third year of teaching (incidentally in my hometown) that opened my eyes. I was a home economics teacher in a newly opened junior high school. Prior to that time I had been employed as a home economics teacher in a special education school where the environment was characterized by flexibility in instructional decisions and practices as well as

respect for differences of viewpoints. When I moved to the junior high, two years later some of my former students from the special education school were mainstreamed into my classes. After teaching a few weeks with the schedule planned for us, a colleague and I realized that many of these mainstreamed students were really struggling. We recognized their potential and knew that changes in the existing schedule would have to be made in order for their needs to be met. The colleague and I approached the administration about some ideas we would like to try, but could not do unless we had their approval. We were given no support for these ideas and felt frustrated that we couldn't serve the students in the best way we thought possible. We were frustrated that we could not discuss ideas further with the administration to determine a mutually agreeable plan.

About six years later I was teaching in another state. During that time I observed the very different approaches that teachers had with regard to instruction for their students. Some took the risk of being different from the school as a whole while others seemed to be comfortable with "the schools' philosophy". Some teachers seemed to feel isolated in their school environments if they held a different perspective than most of the teachers in the school.

After ten years of teaching experience, I began a doctoral program throughout which I have had many opportunities for recognizing and appreciating diverse perspectives. One opportunity was helping to supervise students teachers. As we worked with student teachers and teachers in the schools, both my University Faculty Mentor and I noticed how Special Education Teachers (particularly LD teachers) were invested in different practices - some traditional and some emerging. As we continued to talk about our observations and I explored the literature, a series of studies began to take shape.

Statement of the Problem

Traditionally, special education teachers taught students in resource and/or self-contained settings and had minimal contact with general educators regarding the instruction of students who were learning disabled. Today, with the advent of inclusion promoting a wide variety of service-delivery models for these students, theoretically the role of the special education teacher is changing. Existing studies may have examined actual practices of special education teachers and

provided evidence for the adoption of particular instructional methods and pedagogies. It appears that some special education teachers are invested in more traditional practices while others are subscribing to emerging practices. Some special education teachers seem to be very much in tune with practices that match those of the overall school while others hold a philosophy different than that of the school and as a result, seem to be isolated from other teachers.

The way that students with learning disabilities will be instructed and the field of learning disabilities is contingent upon how special education teachers perceive their roles and view instructional practices for these students. Literature supports the notion that teachers are not likely to change practices or adopt an innovation unless they can see a need for the change and are invested in the change or innovation. Examining the thinking behind teacher practices will help to understand how and why teachers are invested in particular practices as well as how and why they may or may not differ from school practices both now and in the future.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this series of studies is to investigate special educators' perspectives of practices concerning the education of students who are learning disabled. This paper will report on the first phase in the series, Selecting Specific Practices which focused primarily on constructing and distributing a survey and analyzing survey results (see Figure 1). The purpose of Phase 1 was to survey special education teachers and university professors nationwide to determine specific practices for further study. Practicing teachers' perspectives of practices were explored with regard to themselves and the schools in which they work across four dimensions: (a) Like me now (Teacher - Now), (b) What I would like to be like in the future (Teacher - Future), (c) Like my

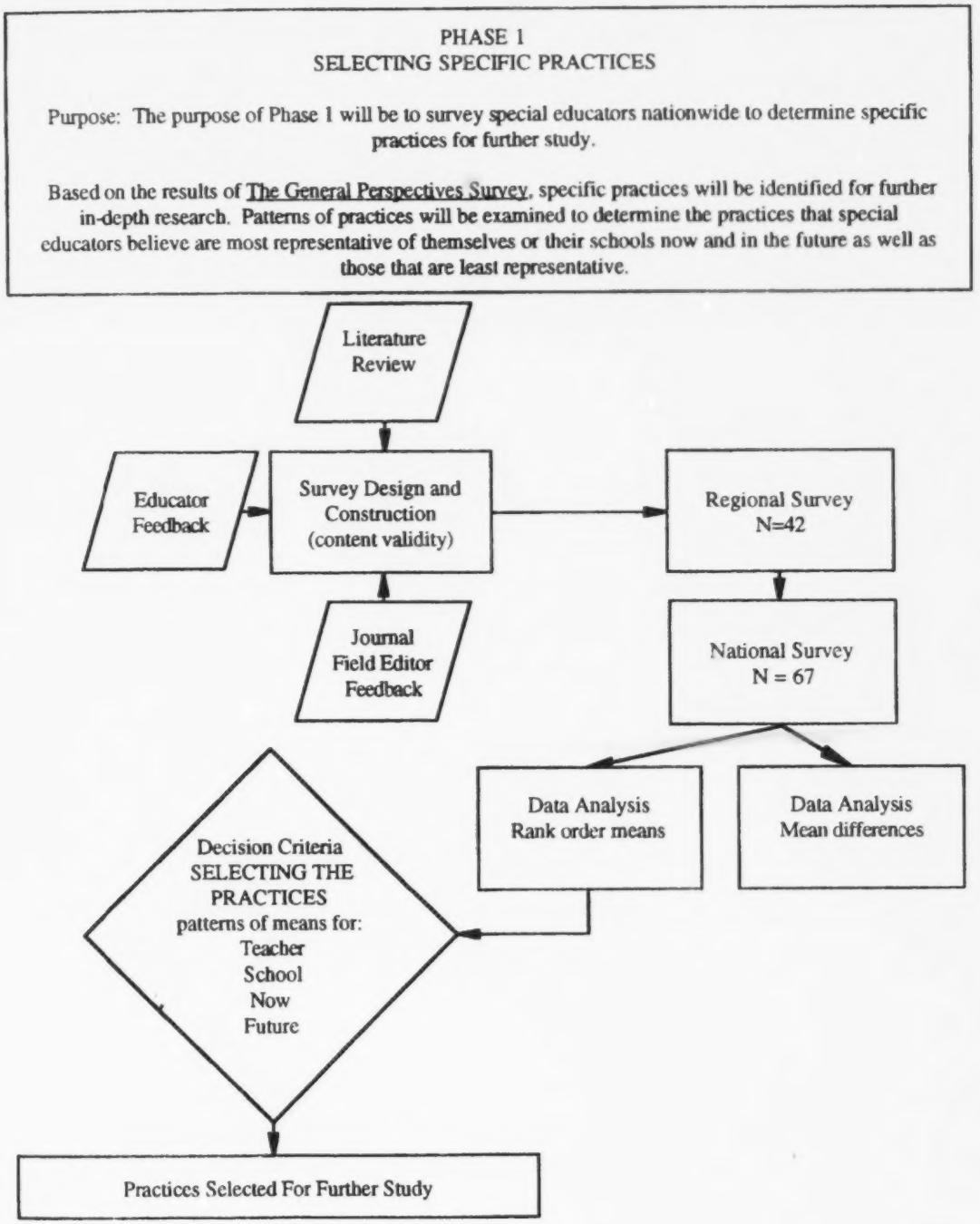
PHASE 1
SELECTING SPECIFIC PRACTICES
Purpose: The purpose of Phase 1 will be to survey special educators nationwide to determine specific practices for further study.
Based on the results of The General Perspectives Survey, specific practices will be identified for further in-depth research. Patterns of practices will be examined to determine the practices that special educators believe are most representative of themselves or their schools now and in the future as well as those that are least representative.
Literature Review
Educator Feedback
Survey Design and Construction (content validity)
Regional Survey N=42
Journal Field Editor Feedback
National Survey N = 67
Data Analysis Rank order means
Data Analysis Mean differences
Decision Criteria SELECTING THE PRACTICES patterns of means for: Teacher School Now Future
Practices Selected For Further Study

Figure 1. Phase 1.

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school now (School - Now), and (d) What I would like my school to be like in the future (School - Future). University professors' perspectives of practices of area special education teachers and schools with which they work most closely were explored across four dimensions: (a) Like special education teachers now (Teacher - Now), (b) What I would like special education teachers to be like in the future (Teacher - Future), (c) Like schools now (School - Now), and (d) What I would like the schools to be like in the future (School - Future).

Research Questions

The following eight research questions were investigated in Phase 1:

1. What specific practices do educators consider most like themselves now?
2. What specific practices do educators consider as those they would like to be like in the future?
3. What specific practices do educators consider least like themselves now?
4. What specific practices do educators consider as those they would least like to be like in the future?
5. What specific practices do educators consider most like their schools now?
6. What specific practices do educators consider as those they would like for their schools to be like in the future?
7. What specific practices do educators consider least like their schools now?
8. What specific practices do educators consider as those they would least like for their schools to be like in the future?

Sample

Students enrolled in graduate special or general education courses at a local university and who had had previous school teaching experience comprised the sample (N=42) for the regional survey. A current listing of 2,551 educators with membership in a national professional organization that focuses on persons who are learning disabled served as the pool from which the Phase 1 sample was drawn for the national survey. A sample (N=67) was randomly selected by

choosing every nth name to ensure equal geographic representation from the listing arranged in zipcode order. See Table 1 for sample demographics.

SAMPLE

Characteristic	Sample 1 N = 42		Sample 2 N = 67	
	#	%	#	%
Field				
Special Education	18	42.86	36	56.3
General Education	24	57.14	3	4.7
Both SPE/ Gen. Ed.			25	39.1
Gender				
Male	4	9.5	6	9.1
Female	38	90.5	60	90.9
Highest Degree Completed				
Bachelors Degree	36	87.5	13	21.0
Masters Degree	6	14.3	32	51.6
Specialist's			12	19.4
Doctoral			5	8.1
Date Degree Completed				
Degree Before 1989	14	33.3	43	70.5
Degree After 1989	28	66.7	18	29.5
Current Position				
Early Childhood/Elementary	20	47.6	21	33.9
Middle School/ Junior High	4	9.5	17	27.4
High School	2	4.8	13	21.0
College/University	2	4.8	4	6.5
Administration/Other			7	11.2

Table 1. Sample demographics.

Instrumentation

The instrument, General Perspectives Survey was developed and validated in Phase 1. It was designed to identify practices for further study. The instrument was comprised of 26 scenarios, each of which represented a practice with regard to learning disabilities instruction, service delivery and definitions. The responses to the scenarios for each dimension comprised a scale, thus, resulting in four scales. For example, Scale A (Teacher-Now) was comprised of teachers' responses to the scenarios with regard to themselves at the present time and university professors' responses regarding the special education teachers with whom they work most closely in area schools. Scale B (Teacher - Future) consisted of teachers' responses to the scenarios based on how they would like to be in the future and university professors' responses as

to how they would like special education teachers from area schools to be in the future. Scale C (School - Now) What most of my school is like now examined teachers' responses to the scenarios with regard to how they view their schools now and university professors responses regarding how they now view the area schools with which they work most closely. Scale D (School - Future) What most of my school should be like in the future was comprised of teachers' perspectives about how they would like to see their schools in the future and university professors responses as to how they would like to see area schools with which they work most closely to become in the future.

Scenarios for the instrument, General Perspectives Survey, were based on the results of a literature review, feedback from educators, and telephone interviews with field editors of learning disabilities journals. See Figure 2 for samples of traditional and emerging practices which were included in some of the scenarios. Field editors of learning disabilities journals were contacted to determine if they would be willing to provide feedback on the construction and content of the survey. Those who agreed were mailed a copy of the preliminary survey. Telephone interviews with these field editors as well as feedback from local teachers and university professors helped to determine if the scenarios were representative of current and potentially emerging practices regarding learning disabilities instruction, service-delivery, and definitions and were clearly worded. This feedback also provided content validity for the instrument. Caution was taken to avoid the use of jargon or words that would convey positive or negative connotations.

Once the instrument was revised, based on feedback from educators and journal field editors, then it was administered to a group of regional educators. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine reliability coefficients for each of the four scales (A, B, C, D) on the General Perspectives Survey.

Teachers' Perspectives of the Present and Future of the Learning Disabilities Field

M. J. Larkin & E. S. Ellis, Ph.D. The University of Alabama

Traditional Perspectives	Emerging Perspectives
Instruction is teacher-directed for the whole class and there may be group and/or individual activities as followup.	**Instruction is student-led** and much of the work is carried out in small cooperative learning groups.
Prior to instruction, the **teacher tests and diagnoses** specific reading problems of students, and then provides special help to remediate the problems by focusing on the deficient reading skills.	As the students read literature, the **teacher evaluates "on-the-spot"** the kinds of reading problems students are experiencing and provides prompts and cues to help them read difficult words.
The **teacher** primarily **makes curriculum decisions** about what students will learn (e.g. content, skills, strategies, etc.)	**Students select from many options** (e.g. lesson topics, learning activities/experiences, projects, etc.) to provide the primary basis for **curriculum decisions**.
The teacher gives specific, **teacher-directed feedback** to assist students with errors in writing assignments. The teacher informs students about incorrect responses and ways to correct errors.	The **teacher facilitates student analysis and discussion** of their written work. The teacher asks specific questions about content and context of written paragraphs with ideas for correction emerging from the students.
The **student receives information** from the teacher, videos, or other sources. The student is expected to remember the information learned (e.g. how to add or multiply, subtraction facts, etc.)	The student **constructs his/her own understanding** of information by being **actively involved** (e.g. working with a peer to determine how to solve a math problem, using math manipulatives, etc.).
Students **learn** about adjectives **by teacher lectures and textbook readings**. They make a list of various adjectives that are in their language arts workbook.	Students work in pairs **writing a letter describing their school** to a friend who attends another school.
Students take a multiple choice, True-False, and essay **test** in order for the teacher **to assess** what they have learned about social studies.	Students keep a social studies **portfolio** in order **to assess their** own progress as well as for their teacher to assess their progress.
Students with learning disabilities receive intensive reading instruction in **pullout special education settings.**	Students with learning disabilities in reading are given all their reading instruction in the **general education classroom**.
Students who are classified as **learning disabled** have **deficits** that need to be strengthened if they are to be more successful.	For students who are classified as learning disabled, the problem is a **mismatch between their abilities and** the expectations of the **school environment.**
The **teacher gives** points, candy, free time to increase student **motivation**.	The **teacher helps students to become interested** in a topic or want to acquire a new skill.

Figure 2. Traditional and emerging perspectives.

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Data Collection.

During Phase 1, data were collected using the General Perspectives Survey. One of the researchers, after gaining advance permission from course instructors, distributed the survey to graduate students (N=42) with teaching experience enrolled in either special or general education university courses. As part of nationwide survey distribution, participants (N=67) were asked to complete and return the survey instrument within approximately two weeks of its receipt. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was included to facilitate the return of the instrument.

All instruments were coded in order to track returns. One week after the survey return deadline, reminder letters along with a second copy of the survey and a stamped, self-addressed envelope were mailed to those persons failing to respond to the initial mailing.

Data Analysis

Data gathered from the General Perspectives Survey are being analyzed in two different ways to answer the research questions. Part 1 analysis examined mean differences to determine significance of preference for traditional and emerging practices. Part 2 analysis (in progress) examines rank ordering of means in order to determine patterns of practices for further study.

Part 1 analysis. The following mean differences were calculated: (a) Difference between means of emerging practices (EP) and traditional practices (TP) by scale, (b) Difference between means of individual teacher (self) and school by traditional practices (TP) and emerging practices (EP), and (c) Difference between means of emerging practices (EP) and traditional practices (TP) by scale for special education and general education teachers (regional survey only). See Figures 3 and 4 for results of Part 1 analysis. Means first were calculated for each of the four Scales (i.e. Teacher - Now, Teacher - Future, School - Now, and School - Future). Traditional practices means were subtracted from emerging practices means. Therefore, a positive mean difference indicated "more like emerging practices" while a negative mean difference indicated "more like traditional practices". Means also were calculated for teacher (self) and school. When school means were subtracted from teacher (self) means a positive mean difference indicated "more like self" while a negative mean difference indicated "more like school".

? ? ? ? ? QUESTIONS ? ? ? ? ?

- Do teachers view themselves more like the traditional or like the emerging practices? Now? Future?
- How do teachers view their schools along these dimensions? Now? Future?
- Do special education and general education teachers differ in terms of their perspectives on traditional vs. emerging practices? Now? Future?

Graduate Students (Regional) - 1994
Differences Between Means of Emerging Practices (EP) and Traditional Practices (TP) by Scale (Difference = EP - TP)

Scale	N	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference "+" = more like TP "-" = more like EP	Probability
Like Me Now	42	0.72	-0.24	0.0362*
Like Me Future	42	0.75	+0.37	0.0026*
My School Now	42	0.75	-0.50	0.0001*
School Future	42	0.76	+0.33	0.0067*

Differences Between Means of Individual Teacher (Self) and School by Traditional Practices (TP) and Emerging Practices (EP) by Scale (Difference = Self - School)

Practices/Time Orientation	N	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference "+" = more like school "-" = more like self	Probability
TP Now	42	0.41	-0.08	0.2516
TP Future	42	0.17	-0.03	0.2291
EP Now	42	0.52	+0.19	0.0266*
EP Future	42	0.13	+0.00	0.8801

Differences Between Means of Emerging Practices (EP) and Traditional Practices (TP) by Traditional Practices (TP) for Special Education and General Education Teachers (Difference = EP - TP)

Scale	N	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference "+" = more like TP "-" = more like EP	Probability
Like Me Now				
Spe.	18	0.49	-0.37	0.0052*
Gen.	24	0.84	-0.14	0.4256
Like Me Future				
Spe.	18	0.73	+0.27	0.1411
Gen.	24	0.77	+0.44	0.0087*
My School Now				
Spe.	18	0.45	-0.64	0.0001*
Gen.	24	0.91	-0.40	0.0447*
School Future				
Spe.	18	0.70	+0.22	0.2037
Gen.	24	0.80	+0.42	0.0170*

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha for Reliability (internal consistency of survey instrument)

Scale	Raw Variables	Standardized Variables
Scale A Like Me Now	0.74	0.75
Scale B Like Me Future	0.78	0.78
Scale C School Now	0.76	0.78
Scale D School Future	0.80	0.80
Total	0.89	0.89

Figure 3. Regional Survey Results.

? ? ? ? ? QUESTIONS ? ? ? ? ?

- Do teachers view themselves more like the traditional practices or like the emerging practices? Now? Future?
- How do teachers view their schools along these dimensions? Now? Future?

Special Education Teachers (National) - 1995
Differences Between Means of Emerging Practices (EP) and Traditional Practices (TP) by Scale (Difference = EP - TP)

Scale	N	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference "+" = more like TP "-" = more like EP	Probability
Like Me Now	67	0.77	-0.10	0.2754
Like Me Future	67	0.83	+0.39	0.0003*
My School Now	67	0.69	-0.48	0.0001*
School Future	67	0.72	+0.38	0.0001*

Special Education Teachers (National) - 1995
Differences Between Means of Individual Teacher (Self) and School by Traditional Practices (TP) and Emerging Practices (EP) by Scale (Difference = Self - School)

Practices/Time Orientation	N	Std. Dev.	Mean Difference "+" = more like school "-" = more like self	Probability
TP Now	67	0.49	-0.03	0.5880
TP Future	67	0.58	+0.35	0.0001*
EP Now	67	0.17	-0.02	0.3083
EP Future	67	0.24	-0.01	0.6654

Special Education Teachers (National) - 1995
Cronbach Coefficient Alpha for Reliability (internal consistency of survey instrument)

Scale	Raw Variables	Standardized Variables
Scale A Like Me Now	0.62	0.62
Scale B Like Me Future	0.67	0.69
Scale C School Now	0.62	0.65
Scale D School Future	0.73	0.73
Total	0.86	0.87

Figure 4. National Survey Results.

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Part 2 analysis. Each of the scenarios on the General Perspectives Survey corresponded with one characteristic of practices with regard to learning disabilities instruction, service delivery and definitions. Means for each of the scenarios on the nationwide survey of special educators only have been rank ordered from highest to lowest for each of the four scales: (a) Teacher - Now, (b) Teacher - Future, (c) School - Now, and (d) School - Future (see Figures 5, 6, 7, and 8). This ranking of scenarios is being examined for patterns of practices that special educators believe are most representative of themselves or their schools now and in the future as well as those practices that are least representative. Examining patterns will determine the practices in which educators may currently be invested and those in which they anticipate being invested in the future. The rationale for this examination is to target specific practices for further in-depth study in order to gain a better understanding about the practices in which educators currently are and are not invested and those in which educators anticipate being invested or not invested for the future. The findings of patterns of practices in Phase 1 will comprise the practices selected for further examination in Phase 2 of this study.

The second phase (in progress) will focus primarily on the qualitative aspects of conducting classroom observations, individual and focus group interviews, and eliciting metaphors. The purpose of Phase 2 will be to describe special education teachers' perspectives on components of specific practices.

PERSPECTIVES OF PRACTICES (Teacher-Self - Now)			
RANK	FUTURE	SCENARIO #	MEAN
HIGHEST	Direct and specific instruction	15 & 21	3.6060606
	Student self-feedback	3	3.4626866
	Student evaluation/monitoring	2	3.4328358
	Teacher-directed feedback	6	3.3333333
	Instruction in real-world context	11	3.3134328
	Assess real-world situations	22	3.2089552
	Student constructs know/understanding	19	3.1492537
	Classify LD for appropriate education	18	3.1269841
	LD get help without category	8	3.0483871
	Student-led instruction	12	2.9402985
	LD viewed in context	20	2.9218750
	Big ideas/core curriculum	16	2.8593750
	Intrinsic motivation	14	2.8484848
	SPE in pullout settings	5	2.8307692
	Student choice in curriculum	26	2.5757576
	Diagnosis/remediation of skills	9	2.5522388
	Extrinsic motivation	10	2.5522388
	Teacher-directed instruction	4	2.5074627
	Teacher determined curriculum	13	2.4626866
	LD is condition within child	7	2.4000000
	Specialized curr., workbooks, seatwork	1	2.3538462
	Curriculum divided into small parts	25	2.2121212
	SPE in general ed. classrooms	23	2.1612903
	Assess through tests	17	1.9649123
LOWEST	Classify LD to explain failure in school	24	1.3846154

Figure 5. Rank ordering of means for perspectives of practices Teacher-Self - Now.

PERSPECTIVES OF PRACTICES (Teacher-Self - Future)			
RANK	PRACTICE	SCENARIO #	MEAN
HIGHEST	Direct and specific instruction	15 & 21	3.6060606
	Student self-feedback	3	3.4626866
	Student evaluation/monitoring	2	3.4328358
	Teacher-directed feedback	6	3.3333333
	Instruction in real-world context	11	3.3134328
	Assess real-world situations	22	3.2089552
	Student constructs know/understanding	19	3.1492537
	Classify LD for appropriate education	18	3.1269841
	LD get help without category	8	3.0483871
	Student-led instruction	12	2.9402985
	LD viewed in context	20	2.9218750
	Big ideas/core curriculum	16	2.8593750
	Intrinsic motivation	14	2.8484848
	SPE in pullout settings	5	2.8307692
	Student choice in curriculum	26	2.5757576
	Diagnosis/remediation of skills	9	2.5522388
	Extrinsic motivation	10	2.5522388
	Teacher-directed instruction	4	2.5074627
	Teacher determined curriculum	13	2.4626866
	LD is condition within child	7	2.4000000
	Specialized curr., workbooks, seatwork	1	2.3538462
	Curriculum divided into small parts	25	2.2121212
	SPE in general ed. classrooms	23	2.1612903
	Assess through tests	17	1.9649123
LOWEST	Classify LD to explain failure in school	24	1.3846154

Figure 6. Rank ordering of means for perspectives of practices Teacher-Self - Future.

PERSPECTIVES OF PRACTICES (School - Now)			
RANK	PRACTICE	SCENARIO #	MEAN
HIGHEST	Teacher-directed instruction	4	3.1194030
	Classify LD for appropriate education	18	3.0158730
	Direct and specific instruction	15 & 21	2.9253731
	Assess through tests	17	2.9076923
	Teacher determined curriculum	13	2.8656716
	LD is condition within child	7	2.6461538
	SPE in pullout settings	5	2.5230769
	Teacher-directed feedback	6	2.3181818
	Instruction in real-world context	11	2.2686567
	Extrinsic motivation	10	2.1940299
	Specialized curr., workbooks, seatwork	1	2.1384615
	Student evaluation/monitoring	2	2.1343284
	Student self-feedback	3	2.1194030
	Big ideas/core curriculum	16	2.1093750
	Intrinsic motivation	14	2.0937500
	Student constructs know/understanding	19	2.0746269
	Classify LD to explain failure in school	24	2.0454545
	Diagnosis/remediation of skills	9	2.0000000
	Assess real-world situations	22	1.9701493
	Student-led instruction	12	1.9402985
	SPE in general ed. classrooms	23	1.8593750
	LD viewed in context	20	1.8307692
	LD get help without category	8	1.7968750
	Curriculum divided into small parts	25	1.5538462
LOWEST	Student choice in curriculum	26	1.5223881

Figure 7. Rank ordering of means for perspectives of practices School - Now.

PERSPECTIVES OF PRACTICES (School - Future)			
RANK	PRACTICE	SCENARIO #	MEAN
HIGHEST	Direct and specific instruction	15 & 21	3.5522388
	Student self-feedback	3	3.5373134
	Teacher-directed feedback	6	3.2727273
	Student evaluation/monitoring	2	3.2686567
	Assess real-world situations	22	3.2537313
	Student constructs know/understanding	19	3.1940299
	Classify LD for appropriate education	18	3.1904762
	LD get help without category	8	3.1718750
	Instruction in real-world context	11	3.1641791
	Student-led instruction	12	3.0000000
	Big ideas/core curriculum	16	2.9687500
	Intrinsic motivation	14	2.9384615
	LD viewed in context	20	2.8923077
	Teacher-directed instruction	4	2.8805970
	SPE in pullout settings	5	2.7031250
	Diagnosis/remediation of skills	9	2.5223881
	Teacher determined curriculum	13	2.5223881
	Specialized curr., workbooks, seatwork	1	2.5076923
	Student choice in curriculum	26	2.5074627
	LD is condition within child	7	2.4000000
	Extrinsic motivation	10	2.3880597
	SPE in general ed. classrooms	23	2.2343750
	Assess through tests	17	2.2153846
	Curriculum divided into small parts	25	2.0923077
LOWEST	Classify LD to explain failure in school	24	1.4696970

Figure 8. Rank ordering of means for perspectives of practices School - Future.

Results

Phase 1. The special educators from the nationwide survey found themselves to be significantly more like the traditional practices now. Both the graduate students (i.e. special and general educators) from the regional survey and the special educators from the nationwide survey would like to be significantly more like the emerging practices in the future. Both groups also indicated that their schools were significantly more like the traditional practices now, but they would like for their schools to be significantly like emerging practices in the future. Based on the

self minus school mean differences, the special educators revealed that they would be significantly more like traditional practices in the future as compared with their school. The graduate students indicated that they were significantly more like emerging practices now as compared with their schools.

In the graduate student group only, special educators were significantly more like the traditional practices as compared with general educators now. The general education graduate students indicated that they would be more like emerging practices in the future as compared with their special education counterparts. Both the special education and general education graduate students noted that their schools were significantly more like the traditional practices now while only the general education students wanted their schools to be significantly more like the emerging practices in the future.

Part 2. Part 2 analysis is still in progress, but Figure 9 illustrates an example of some patterns that may be studied in more depth in Phase 2. Notice that direct instruction ranked highest for all four scales with student choice in curriculum ranking lowest for both teacher and school now; yet, for the future direct instruction remains most like teacher and school practices, but at the same time teachers expect students to provide and monitor their own feedback.

Example of Patterns of Practices from Phase 1 Selected for Further Study

Rank	Teacher - Now	Teacher Future	School - Now	School - Future
Highest	Direct and specific instruction	Direct and specific instruction Student self-feedback	Teacher-directed instruction	Direct and specific instruction Student self-feedback
Lowest	Student choice in curriculum		Student choice in curriculum	

Figure 9. Example of Patterns of Practices from Phase 1 Selected for Further Study

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Conclusions

Figure 10 illustrates the overall trends which can be concluded from part 1 analysis. Overall, teachers view both themselves and their schools now as reflecting more traditional practices. For the future, they would like themselves and their schools to be more like the emerging practices. Graduate students view themselves as significantly more like the emerging practices than they view their schools now while special education teachers in the field can't perceive this as much of a difference. Special education teachers view themselves as significantly more like the traditional practices than they view they schools in the future while graduate students don't see this as much of a difference.

With regard to specific trends, teachers view the need for instruction to be more contextualized and holistic. They place high value on teaching self-control techniques, but view themselves clearly as the center around which instruction and curriculum evolves. Labeling process are viewed as necessities only to ensure that services are provided for students who are learning disabled. The "big winners" are teacher-centered classes, contextualized /holistic instruction, classifying to secure help, and providing lots of help before resorting to classifying. Practices that are considered "big losers" are child-centered instruction, emphasizing isolate skills, diagnostic/remediation model, using learning disabilities as a basis for explaining problems, and inclusion.

Phase 1 of a series of studies supports the literature in that teachers may have different perspectives of instructional practices concerning the education of students who are learning disabled. With innovative practices for instructing children who are learning disabled finding their way into the schools, teachers will continue to be faced with the issue of teaching by traditional practices or subscribing to some of the emerging practices. Examining teachers' perspectives or the way they view instructional practices can provide an empirical base for current and future policy decisions affecting teacher preparation programs and staff development. The intent of ongoing research in this series of studies on teacher perspectives is to contribute to a growing body of

literature to assist in gaining a better understanding of what it means to be a teacher and provide a method for analyzing teacher perspectives of instructional practices in-depth.

OVERALL TRENDS

Teacher view both themselves and their schools now as reflecting more traditional practices. For the future, they would like themselves and their schools to be more like the emerging paradigm.

Graduate students view themselves as significantly more like the emerging practices than they view their schools now while special education teachers in the field can't perceive this as much of a difference.

Special education teachers view themselves as significantly more like the traditional practices than they view their schools in the future while graduate students don't perceive this as much of a difference.

TRENDS FOR SPECIFIC PRACTICES

Teachers view themselves and their schools as already engaged to a degree in many of the emerging practices....however, there are some traditional practices in which they are thoroughly invested now and hold similar perspectives about the future...

Conventional Wisdom
(What's HOT - What's NOT)

Specific Practice	Grad. Students	SPE Teachers
Teacher-centered instruction	↑	↑
Child-centered instruction	↑	↓
Emphasizing BIG ideas	↑	←→
Contextualized instruction	↑	↑
Emphasizing parts/ isolated skills	↓	↓
Cooperative learning	←→	↓ now ↑ future
Student constructed understandings	←→	↓ now ↑ future
Student directed feedback	↑	←→ now ↑ future
Use of subjective tests (paper/pencil tasks)	↓	↑ schnow ↓
Performance based assessment	←→	↓ now ↑ future
Diagnostic remedial model	↓	↓
Formal core curriculum	↓	←→
Student choice	↓	↓
S=IxE perspective on LD	↑	↑ self ↓ school
Classification to obtain/ensure services	↑	↑
Use LD label as a basis for explaining problems	↓	↓
Providing help without classifying	↑	↓ now ↑ future
Inclusion	↓	↓
Pull-out	←→	↑ now ←→ future

In essence, teachers views the need for instruction to be more contextualized and holistic. They place high value on teaching self-control techniques, but view themselves clearly as the center around which instruction and curriculum evolves.
Labeling processes are view as necessities to ensure services are provided.

Big Winners: Teacher-centered classes, contextualized/holistic instruction, classifying to secure help, providing lots of help before resorting to classifying

Big Losers: Child-centered instruction, emphasizing isolated skills, diagnostic/remediation model, using LD as a basis for explaining problems, inclusion

Figure 10. Overall and specific trends in practices.

How Special Education Teachers View Themselves and Their Schools
Relative to Traditional and Emerging Practices

Similar Views of Self & School	Different Views of Self & School
*Very invested in teacher directed instruction *Very willing to classify students to secure services. *Very interested in contextualized instruction. *Very interested in teaching self-control feedback. *Moderately invested in student-constructed understandings ; higher in future. ≠Don't view students' classification (label) as explanation for failure. ≠Very divested from diagnostic remediation model. ≠Very divested from child-centered classrooms. ≠Very divested from inclusion.	Special Education Teachers invested in student choice BUT perceive that schools are not valuing student choice.

Figure 11. Trends in special education practices.

References

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